

**In the Claims**

Please replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application with the following list of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An optical connector assembly comprising:
  - a) an optical connector comprising a plurality of connector elements, each of the connector elements having a mating face with an opening therein; and
  - b) a dust cover comprising a plurality of like modules coupled together, each of the modules having a portion covering the opening of a front mating face of a connector element.
2. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 1 wherein the dust cover comprises at least one second type module, different from said plurality of like modules, the second type module having features thereon for latching to the optical connector.
3. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 1 wherein each of the plurality of connector elements includes a shutter.
4. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 1 wherein each of the modules has opposing sides with complementary engagement features formed on the opposing sides.
5. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 4 wherein the engagement features comprise holes and projections with the projections of one module aligned to engage holes in an adjacent module when the modules are placed side-by-side.
6. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 1 wherein the optical connector is a backplane connector in an electronic assembly.
7. (Currently Amended) The optical connector assembly of claim 1 wherein the optical connector additionally comprises a support member to which the connector

elements are attached and each of the dust cover modules forms an interference fit with the support member.

8. (Currently Amended) The optical connector assembly of claim 1 wherein the optical connector is mounted in the backplane of an electronics system of the type that receives a plurality of daughter cards of predetermined size characteristics, the assembly further comprising a dummy board having the size characteristics of a daughter board, wherein the dust cover is mounted to the dummy board.

9. (Currently Amended) The optical connector assembly of claim 8 wherein the dust cover is mounted to the dummy board through a compliant mount.

10. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 1 additionally comprising a gasket encircling the plurality of connector elements.

11-32 Cancelled

33. (Currently Amended) An optical connector assembly comprising:

- a) an optical connector comprising a plurality of connector elements aligned side-by-side, each of the connector elements having a housing with a mating face having an opening therein; and
- b) a dust cover comprising a plurality of like modules, each of the modules having a cover portion covering the opening of a front mating face of a connector element, each of the like modules having arms extending from the cover portion and engaging the housing.

34. (Currently Amended) The optical connector assembly of claim 33 wherein the ~~cover~~ modules are C-shaped.

35. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 33 wherein the housing of each module is compressible and compressing the housing actuates a shutter that covers

the mating end of an optical fiber and the arms engage the housing when the housing is in a compressed state.

36. (Currently Amended) The optical connector assembly of claim 35 wherein the dust cover additionally comprises an adhesive member on the cover portion.

37. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 36 wherein the adhesive member comprises a plurality of separable adhesive pads.

38. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 37 wherein each of the plurality of adhesive members has a tab extending therefrom, providing a mechanism to remove a pad.

39. (Original) The optical connector assembly of claim 33 additionally comprising a projection from the cover portion extending away from the front mating face.

40. (Currently Amended) The optical connector assembly of claim 39 wherein the optical connector assembly is mounted to a daughter card for an electronic assembly, the electronic assembly includes a force generating apparatus that can be actuated to seat a daughter card in a backplane and the projection holds the daughter card sufficiently far from the backplane that it does not engage the force generating apparatus.

41. (Currently Amended) The optical connector assembly of claim 33 wherein each of the ~~cover~~ modules latches to the connector housing.

42. (Currently Amended) The optical connector assembly of claim 33 wherein each of the ~~cover~~ modules engages the connector housing with a friction fit.

43. (Previously Presented) An optical connector assembly comprising:

- a) an optical connector comprising a plurality of connector elements, each of the connector elements having a mating face with an opening therein;
- b) a cover comprising a plurality of modules coupled together, each of the modules having a portion covering the opening of a front mating face of a connector element; and
- c) an adhesive substance positioned between the optical connector and the cover.

44. (Previously Presented) The optical connector assembly of claim 43 wherein the adhesive substance comprises at least one gel-pack.

45. (Previously Presented) The optical connector assembly of claim 44 wherein the adhesive substance comprises a plurality of gel-packs, each of the gel-packs disposed between one of the connector elements and one of modules.

46. (Previously Presented) The optical connector assembly of claim 43 wherein each of the connector elements has a compressible face and a shutter actuated by compression of the compressible face, and wherein the cover comprises a latching member whereby the connector element may be latched to the cover with the compressible face against the adhesive substance.

47. (Previously Presented) The optical connector assembly of claim 46 additionally comprising a gasket encircling the connector element.

48. (Previously Presented) The optical connector of claim 43 wherein each optical connector element comprises a ferrule.

49. (Currently Amended) A method of using an optical connector, comprising:

a) providing an optical connector as in claim 48; The optical connector assembly of claim 48 cleaned according to the method of:

b) pressing the cover towards the optical connector until the adhesive substance engages the ferrule;

c) removing the cover; and

d)e) coupling the optical connector to a second optical connector.

50. (Previously Presented) The optical connector of claim 43 wherein the adhesive substance is a ring.

51. (Previously Presented) The optical connector of claim 43 wherein the adhesive substance is a pad.

52. (Previously Presented) The optical connector of claim 43 wherein the adhesive substance comprises a plurality of separable, stacked adhesive members.

53. (Previously Presented) The optical connector of claim 52 wherein each of the adhesive members has a backing including a non-adhesive tab.

54. (Previously Presented) The optical connector of claim 53 wherein each optical connector element comprises at least one fiber having a mating end exposed in the opening of the mating face and the adhesive substance contacts the mating end of the at least one optical fiber.

55. (Currently Amended) A method of using an optical connector comprising: ~~The optical connector of claim 54 used according to the method of:~~

a) providing an optical connector as in claim 54;

b)a) removing one of the separable members to expose a clean surface of at least one separable, stacked adhesive member; and

b) installing the cover on the connector with the clean surface contacting the mating end of the optical fiber.